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SIPDIS

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DHAHRAN SENDS

STATE FOR NEA/PPD CWHITTLESEY,IIP/G/NEA TSCOTT,IIP/T/ES

BDURANT

PARIS FOR ZEYA, LONDON FOR TSOU

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SCUL](#) [KPAO](#) [KMPI](#) [SA](#)

SUBJECT: SAUDI BUSINESSWOMEN ENERGIZED BY LEADERSHIP WORKSHOPS

REF: STATE 83422

1. (U) Summary: Business and communication professors Kathy Long Holland and Kay Westerfield led four engaging workshops on leadership and entrepreneurship on December 19th and 20th. In cooperation with the Businesswomen's Center at the Eastern Province Chamber of Commerce in Dammam, Holland and Westerfield led three workshops attended by 30 women representing a range of ages and professions. One entrepreneurship workshop was also held in the Shia city of Qatif, targeted at a young group of women with little access to information of this kind. Attendees were excited and encouraged by the workshops, which focused on better business skills, enhancing communication techniques, and fostering new networks of contacts between the participants. End summary.

"WE NEED THIS KIND OF TRAINING"

2. (U) Following paragraphs are formatted as requested in reftel.

A. Kathy Long Holland and Kay Westerfield, December 19 - 20 2005.

B. Holland and Westerfield ran workshops on leadership skills, communication tools, and entrepreneurship. Topics included self-awareness, communication styles, and business plan development. With the overall framework of leadership and business, the speakers tailored their discussions to the size and type of the audience. Two venues were used - a conference room at the Eastern Province Chamber of Commerce building in Dammam, and a meeting room at the Al Hadi Clinic in Qatif. Thirty women attended the workshops at the Chamber of Commerce, representing a range of ages and professions, from an architect opening a consulting firm, to a woman expanding a catering business into a chain of bakeries, to a design student thinking of starting a fashion label. The workshop participants included one woman who will be a candidate in the upcoming Chamber elections, which will be the first time women have been allowed to either run or vote in the elections in the Eastern Province. The 6-person audience in the Shia town of Qatif came from a more disadvantaged group of younger women with little access to resources. Given the smaller size of this group, the discussion focused on strategies for individual business plans.

C. Kathy Long Holland and Kay Westerfield are excellent speakers, and were able to relate well to Saudi women of different socioeconomic and professional background. Participants found the women very approachable, and brought up specific questions about their business plans during and after the workshops. As a pair, the two speakers complemented each other, matching Holland's entrepreneur and business consulting experience with Westerfield's communication skills work.

D. The quality of IIP support was excellent.

E. This program for businesswomen comes at a time of change in Saudi Arabia, as women start to take more visible roles in the public sphere. Women in the Eastern Province will be able to participate in the Chamber of Commerce elections for the first time in February 2006. Leadership and communication skills for businesswomen expand their ability to succeed in business and participate fully in civil society. A director of an educational institution, who attended with her two sisters, said "we need this kind of training." At both venues, women were able to network with other businesswomen, creating new connections. Over the course of this program we also linked the women in Qatif with the Businesswomen's Center at the Chamber of Commerce. We distributed information about the range of Public Diplomacy programs available Saudi Arabia and gave out hundreds of books from the "English for Business" Minimax Series. The workshops, and the US Consulate, received positive press coverage in the regional

Al Yaum Newspaper (circulation: 45,000) and the international
Al Hayat Newspaper (circulation: 200,000, although the local
edition varies from place to place).

(APPROVED: ASGARD)
GFOELLER